

City of Corunna  
Regular Council Meeting  
Monday, August 18, 2003

Present: Corey, Johnson, Mehigh, Runyan, Sanderson, Wagner.

Absent: None.

Guests: Joe Sawyer, City Manager; Shirley Sanderson; Janet Washburn, Parks and Recreation Director; Judy Horton; Pat & Bernie Yott; Sgt. Kevin Clark, Police Department; Helen Granger, The Independent; Gary Granger; Bill Runyan; Sandie & Avery Weaver; Fire Chief Scott Johnson, Fire Department; Kevin Feuka, Capital Consultants; and other concerned citizens.

The meeting was called to order in the City Council Chambers by Mayor Corey at 7:00 p.m.

MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS REGULAR MEETING: Johnson moved, Sanderson seconded to approve the regular meeting minutes dated August 4, 2003 as presented.

Roll call vote:

Yes: Wagner, Johnson, Sanderson, Runyan, Mehigh.

No: None.

Motion CARRIED

AGENDA APPROVAL: Wagner moved, Johnson seconded to approve the agenda as presented.

Roll call vote:

Yes: Runyan, Mehigh, Wagner, Johnson, Sanderson.

No: None.

Motion CARRIED

APPROVAL OF VENDOR DISBURSEMENTS: Runyan moved, Wagner seconded to approve the vendor disbursements as presented.

Roll call vote:

Yes: Runyan, Wagner, Sanderson, Mehigh, Johnson.

No: None.

Motion CARRIED

CITY MANAGER'S REPORT: Joe Sawyer reviewed his manager's report with council and the audience. He advised Eli Bromley from U.S.D.A. would be in town on Tuesday to finish the smoke testing program in the third ward.

CONSIDER MACK STREET AND UTILITY IMPROVEMENT BIDS: Mr. Sawyer advised the cost of the project was for one block. The water line has been identified in the Water Liability Study as a line that needs to be increased in size so it has been recommended to replace the six-inch water line with an eight-inch water line. He further advised the whole block would be torn out and replaced, curb and gutter would be installed, the water and sewer lines would be replaced, the driveway approaches would be replaced and some sidewalk work would also be done. Mehigh moved, Wagner seconded to approve the 2003 Street and Utility Improvements on Mack Street in the amount of \$156,403.57 to be

paid for from accounts 202-453-818.000 (Major Street Contractual Services), 590-549-818.000 (Waste Water Collection Contractual Services) and 591-557-818.000 (Water Contractual Services).

Roll call vote:

Yes: Sanderson, Mehigh, Johnson, Wagner, Runyan.

No: None.

Motion CARRIED

CONSIDER CHANGE TO AT-LARGE APPOINTMENT TO SATA BOARD: Mayor Corey

suggested going with an at-large member unless there is a council member who has a driving need to be on the board. Councilperson Sanderson asked when the next SATA board meeting was. Mayor Corey asked if the meeting was held on the second Tuesday. Councilperson Runyan advised yes. Mayor Corey advised the next meeting would be on the second Tuesday. Wagner moved, Johnson seconded to modify the Rules of Procedure to allow the appointment of at-large representatives from the City of Corunna to the SATA board. Councilperson Sanderson stated he asked what the date of the next SATA meeting was and did not get an answer. Mayor Corey advised the second Tuesday of each month. Councilperson Sanderson stated he wanted the date. Councilperson Wagner advised September 9. Councilperson Sanderson stated he just wanted the date of the next meeting. Councilperson Sanderson offered to be the interim representative until an at-large member is appointed.

Roll call vote:

Yes: Mehigh, Runyan, Johnson, Sanderson, Wagner.

No: None.

Motion CARRIED

SATA UPDATE – LARRY ALPERT: Councilperson Runyan stated the newspaper article covered the issue pretty well. The SATA board could not come up with answers to all of the questions they received so a decision was made to move the millage election to August of next year. He further stated the SATA board should have something put together to present to everybody including the townships before the election. Mr. Sawyer advised he spoke with Larry Alpert and Mr. Alpert wanted to thank the Corunna city council for how he was treated because there were many jurisdictions that did not treat him like he was treated in Corunna.

CONSIDER APPOINTMENT OF COUNCIL MEMBER TO FIRE BOARD: Mayor Corey

advised he was recommending that Dan Wagner be appointed to the fire board because he felt Councilperson Wagner would probably be around in the fall since he did not know who was running for council. Mayor Corey further advised this would also give Councilperson Wagner some experience on the fire board for a couple of months. Councilperson Mehigh advised there were two excellent candidates and he thought Councilperson Wagner would be an outstanding member of the fire board, but Councilperson Runyan came to him before Councilperson Jessen resigned and expressed his desire to get on the fire board. Councilperson Mehigh further advised Councilperson Runyan reminded him that he had passed up the fire board the last time. Councilperson Mehigh also advised he expressed to Councilperson Runyan that there were two members on the fire board that will not do the treasurer's job and if Councilperson Runyan was appointed then he would have to do the treasurer's job. Councilperson Mehigh stated since Councilperson Runyan is the Mayor Pro-Tem and the senior councilperson, then he

should be appointed to the fire board. Johnson moved to appoint Dan Wagner to the Corunna/Caledonia Fire Administration Board to fill the seat vacated by the resignation of Councilperson Jessen. Motion died due to lack of support. Sanderson moved, Mehigh seconded to appoint Larry Runyan to the Corunna/Caledonia Fire Administration Board to fill the seat vacated by the resignation of Councilperson Jessen.

Roll call vote:

Yes: Runyan, Mehigh, Wagner, Johnson, Sanderson.

No: None.

Motion CARRIED

CONSIDER LIFT ARM INSTALLATION ON FOOT BRIDGE: Mayor Corey stated the equipment would be used in preparation of emergency services using the foot bridge in McCurdy Park to handle emergencies on the north side of the river during the bridge construction. Councilperson Mehigh asked what the cost would be. Mr. Sawyer stated the cost of the lift arm was \$3,200, which did not include the installation. There would be electrical needs to get electrical service to the unit, and the lift arm would be controlled at both ends of the foot bridge. He further stated he plans to ask the vendors what it would cost to fix the unit if someone drives through the unit or if the unit is broken due to vandalism. Councilperson Johnson asked if the equipment could be used again. Mr. Sawyer advised the lift arm could be used at the brush yard. Councilperson Sanderson asked if it was possible to search the Internet for used equipment. Mr. Sawyer advised this was how Mr. Crawford found this company. Councilperson Mehigh stated if there were three streetlights in the park, this might slow down the vandalism. He further stated he would like to see some kind of light installed by the foot bridge because most vandals do not like lights. Mayor Corey advised there are two mercury lights that light up the foot bridge quite well. Mr. Sawyer advised no action was being requested tonight because he wanted to find out if this concept was something that should be pursued. Councilperson Johnson stated she felt Caledonia Charter Township should help pay for some of this if this is the route the city decides to go. Mayor Corey stated the foot bridge should only be used for emergencies and not as a regular route.

PRESENTATION-HABITAT FOR HUMANITY WALK-A-THON: Mayor Corey advised the Habitat for Humanity has requested to use the park on September 19 and 20, 2003 the same way the Relay for Life has used the park. If council wanted to address this issue tonight, then council could make a motion to allow Habitat for Humanity to use the park by using the special events policy or wait until the next council meeting. Councilperson Sanderson asked what the fee was. Ms. Washburn advised \$100 per day plus any expenses incurred by the city. Mr. Sawyer advised the special events policy already gives a discount for non-profit organizations. He further advised council could make a motion to approve the September 19 and 20 walk-a-thon as per provisions of the special events policy. Runyan moved, Mehigh seconded to grant the Habitat for Humanity Walk-a-thon on September 19 and 20, 2003 as per provisions of the special events policy for non-profit organizations if they so choose to hold the event.

Roll call vote:

Yes: Runyan, Wagner, Sanderson, Mehigh, Johnson.

No: None.

Motion CARRIED

CONSIDER RESOLUTION 08-18-03-01 HEADLEE OVERRIDE MILLAGE PROPOSAL:

Councilperson Mehigh stated the people need to be informed why the city needs the millage and the council needs to get information out telling the people what the millage will cost them. Councilperson Runyan asked if the Headlee override would be for one year only or could council specify how many years the city wants to do it. Mr. Sawyer advised at one point in time the voters of Corunna approved a 15-mill tax base for city operations, but because of state law, the city has seen a reduction each year. Some of the reduction was done unconstitutionally by the State of Michigan. He further advised the state has not allowed the city to take credit against personal property as the personal property depreciates and the city was forced to roll the millage back, which has caused the city to be down one and one-half mill or about \$75,000. He also advised the city has continually had to look at cutting services to the residents and before the city has to make any additional cuts, the city council should ask the residents to restore the millage to 15 mills. If the residents agree to restore the millage, the city council would have the authority to levy the millage back up to 15 mills, but the Headlee amendment would start reducing the millage the next year. Mr. Sawyer stated the Headlee amendment is complicated and depends on the amount of new growth, new taxable value, inflation, and how much homes are selling for compared to the taxable value. Councilperson Sanderson stated the important thing is to get the information out to the people because a lot of people do not know what the Headlee amendment is. Mr. Sawyer stated the city has done a lot of things to be proud of and the people are generally happy with the things that have been done. He further stated the city has seen \$75,000 in revenue sharing cuts over the last three years. Councilperson Mehigh stated the city council has made some significant cuts this year, but the city council is getting to a point where council has to decide where other cuts should be made. He further stated if the people could see the problems the city council sees, then the people might have a better understanding of what some of the city's problems are. Councilperson Runyan stated the city is only asking for a \$1.50 increase per 1,000 taxable value. Mayor Corey stated the city needs to be fair to the residents. He did not think it would be reasonable to do a Headlee override and not go back to the 15 mills because the money is needed to operate the city. He further stated he has been in government for a long time and he has not seen where taxes have been reduced. He agreed with Councilperson Sanderson that the Headlee amendment needs to be explained but the Headlee amendment is complicated and most people will vote on how much something will cost them. Mayor Corey asked if the override would be done on an annual basis and if it would be good to do this on an annual basis. Mr. Sawyer advised if there are going to be cuts or reductions to city services, then it would be fair to let the voters make that decision annually for council. Councilperson Sanderson stated he thought it would be a good idea for Mr. Sawyer to go on the Channel Three television show because if Mr. Sawyer has a chance to go on the show again, it might be helpful to bring some graphs and charts to help the people, who watch the program, to understand the tax figures. He further stated the graphs and charts could be put in the newspaper to explain the tax figures. Mr. Sawyer stated the city is not allowed to spend taxpayer dollars to promote any type of campaign. Information can be provided but unfortunately, the city does not have an organization to promote things like this. He further stated the facts can be stated but the city has to be very neutral with the facts that are given out. Councilperson Sanderson asked if it would be possible to do something. Mr. Sawyer advised yes. Councilperson Sanderson stated he thought something should be done to promote the millage proposal. Wagner moved, Sanderson seconded to approve the following resolution:

**RESOLUTION NO. 08-18-03-01**  
**HEADLEE OVERRIDE MILLAGE PROPOSAL**

WHEREAS, The City of Corunna has experienced decreases in revenue sharing in the past several years due to declines in Michigan's economy; and

WHEREAS, The City of Corunna has experienced modest Taxable Value growth in the past several years due to stagnant growth and loss of personal property; and

WHEREAS, the "Headlee" amendment to the Michigan Constitution has had the effect of reducing the City's capability to replace state revenues with funds generated locally through the levy of the property tax; and

WHEREAS, The State of Michigan administration of the "Headlee" amendment in regard to personal property depreciation has forced exaggerated and unconstitutional reductions to the City's operating millage on both existing and new development by decisions that are beyond local control; and

WHEREAS, the Constitution requires a vote of the citizens of Corunna in order to restore the City's millage rate to the Charter-authorized maximum of 15 mills; and

WHEREAS, it is prudent to seek voter approval to restore the City's millage rate so as to have greater flexibility in utilizing local sources of revenue when the City Council should deem it fiscally prudent to do so;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the following proposal be submitted to the electors in the City of Corunna at the November 4, 2003 general election:

**GENERAL OPERATING MILLAGE PROPOSAL**  
**(RESTORATION OF "HEADLEE" REDUCTION)**

**This proposal requests an increase in the millage rate for general municipal purposes. The "Headlee" amendment to the Michigan Constitution of 1963 has caused a reduction in the City of Corunna's millage rate. The increase will allow the City of Corunna to levy the maximum amount permitted by its Charter.**

**Shall the millage authorized to be levied for general municipal purposes by the City of Corunna, Michigan be increased from \$13.4372 per \$1,000 of taxable valuation to \$15.000 per \$1,000 of taxable valuation?**

**YES**              

**NO**               

Resolved this 18<sup>th</sup> of August, 2003.

Roll call vote:

Yes:    Sanderson, Mehig, Johnson, Wagner, Runyan.

No:     None.

Motion CARRIED

CONSIDER R-O TO C-2 REZONINGS ON EAST MCNEIL STREET: Mayor Corey advised the rezoning requests have come from the planning commission. Johnson moved, Wagner seconded to re-zone the property located at 200, 202 & 210 E. McNeil Street and currently owned by Donna and Wayne Kintgen from R-O to C-2 and described as: Parcel #026-18-200-000 (200 & 202 E. McNeil St) described as: McArthur's Addition-City of Corunna, Part of Outlot 2: Commencing at the Northwest corner of Outlot 2, then South to a line which is 195 feet South of & parallel with the East & West ¼ line of section, then East 170 feet, then North to the South line of McNeil St., then West 170 feet to beg. Also Parcel #026-18-200-001 (210 E. McNeil St) described as: McArthur's Addition-City of Corunna-The East 94 feet of the North 191 feet of Outlot 2. Also Parcel #026-18-200-002 (vacant lot behind 200 & 202 E. McNeil St) described as: McArthur's Addition to the City of Corunna. The South 135 feet of Outlot 2.

Roll call vote:

Yes: Mehig, Runyan, Johnson, Sanderson, Wagner.

No: None.

Motion CARRIED

Runyan moved, Johnson seconded to re-zone the property located at 220 E. McNeil Street and currently owned by Robert Newman (Bob's Tire Service) from R-O to C-2 and described as: Parcel #026-18-100-003 (220 E. McNeil St) described as: McArthur's Addition-City of Corunna-Part of Outlot 1: Commencing at a point on the South line of McNeil Street 172 feet West of the West line of McDonnell St, then South on the East line of Outlot 2 to the Southeast corner of Outlot, then E'ly along Ann Arbor Railroad Right-of-way to the West line of McDonnell Street, then North on the West line of said street 160 feet, the West parallel with McNeil St 72 feet, then Northerly parallel with McDonnell Street to the South line of McNeil Street, then West on the South line of McNeil Street 100 feet to the beginning.

Roll call vote:

Yes: Johnson, Sanderson, Wagner, Mehig, Runyan.

No: None.

Motion CARRIED

Wagner moved, Johnson seconded to re-zone the property located at 304 E. McNeil Street and currently owned by William H. & Nancy J. Runyan from R-O to C-2 and currently described as: Parcel #026-28-004-004-01 (304 E. McNeil St) described as: S.B. Thomas Addition to the City of Corunna. All of Lot 4 & part of Lot 5, Block 4 described as: Commencing at the Northeast corner of Lot 4, then South 161.50 feet on the East line of Lot 4 to the Southeast corner of Lot 4, then S89°57'W 7 feet, then North 54 feet to a point on the North line of Lots 4 & 5 which is N89°57'E 42 feet from the Northwest corner of Lot 5, then N89°57'E 58 feet on said North line to beg. Also parcel #026-28-004-006 (vacant lot behind 304 E. McNeil St) described as: S.B. Thomas Addition-City of Corunna-Lots 6 & 7, Block 4.

Roll call vote:

Yes: Wagner, Johnson, Sanderson, Runyan, Mehig.

No: None.

Motion CARRIED

Johnson moved, Sanderson seconded to re-zone the property located at 426 E. McNeil Street currently owned by Gerald and Diane Smolinski from R-O to C-2 described as: Parcel #026-28-001-002-01 (426 E. McNeil St) described as: S.B. Thomas Addition to the City of Corunna – Lots 3,4,5,6,7,8 & 9. Also the West 30 feet of Lots 2 & 10 & the West 60 feet of Lot 12, Block 2.

Roll call vote:

Yes: Runyan, Mehig, Wagner, Johnson, Sanderson.

No: None.

Motion CARRIED

CALL TO AUDIENCE: Bill Runyan thanked the city council for rezoning his property to commercial. He stated the city needs to put a freeze on employee pay raises before the city council goes for the Headlee roll back.

Janet Washburn stated there was going to be a dedication for the Westside Pavilion on September 6, but since there is a tractor show that weekend, it would be best to change the dedication date. She further stated she would bring a new dedication date to the next council meeting.

Avery Weaver stated he was privileged to be able to attend some of the council meetings and encouraged council to call if council had any questions or concerns. He further stated the city is within its right to bring the Headlee override to the people again, but he encouraged the council to express where the city's needs are in addition to what the costs are going to be. The people need to know why the override is needed, which will help the Corunna residents to justify voting for the Headlee override. He also stated if people do not understand that there is a real need, the people will be very defensive on trying to vote for something that will cost them more dollars. It will take being able to communicate what the real costs are, what the city's needs are, and why the people should vote to increase their taxes.

Mayor Corey advised there are some employees who are employed under a contract, but this year the city council has drastically changed some of the non-contractual employee benefits. The employees are not happy about it, but the cost of insurance has gone up drastically so the city instituted a 20 percent co-pay. He further advised Mr. Sawyer has done an incredible study of comparable cities and the average number of employees per city was 26 and the City of Corunna has 16 employees, and our employees do an incredible job. Mayor Corey also advised the city council is taking a real hard look at every aspect of the entire city. Mr. Runyan advised he retired from the military and has only received a two-percent pay raise in the last five years. Mayor Corey advised there were some employees who took a pay loss because they had to pay that 20 percent co-pay.

ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION: Councilperson Sanderson asked if the new T-ball field was still on for this year. Mr. Sawyer advised there were some scheduling conflicts. Ms. Washburn advised the young man works on a farm in the summer and he informed her he would not be able to do the project until fall. She further advised another young man is doing a signage project for the park.

Councilperson Johnson stated she was glad to see that the flower baskets were trimmed at Shiawassee Street and Mack Street.

Councilperson Runyan stated the riverbank next to city hall looks great after the brush was cleared.

Councilperson Mehig stated the striped barrel by the post office has been run over by quite a few people, and since the light fixture is not going to be replaced, something should be done to eliminate the problem.

Mayor Corey asked if the new charter was close to being done. Mr. Sawyer advised he would check on the progress. Mayor Corey reminded everyone about the Library Parade on Saturday. Mayor Corey stated he and the council felt that Mr. Sawyer was not properly recognized for the time he spent on the county commissions and presented Mr. Sawyer with a plaque recognizing Mr. Sawyer's efforts. Avery Weaver presented Mr. Sawyer with a proclamation on behalf of the county commissioners.

ADJOURN: Johnson moved, Mehig seconded to adjourn.

Roll call vote:

Yes: Runyan, Wagner, Sanderson, Mehig, Johnson.

No: None.

Motion CARRIED Time was 8:30 p.m.

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STEVE COREY, MAYOR

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YVONNE F. LONG, CITY CLERK